RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 5th August, 1986/ 14 Sravana 1908 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Supply of Arms to Sri Lanka by Pakistan and Israel

*261. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM:

Will the Minister of EXTENAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent statement of Sri Lankan President reported in certain section of the Press to the effect that Sri Lanka is obtaining arms from Pakistan and Israel to fight the Tamils;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto in the context of their efforts to seek political solution to the ethnic problem;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a number of American warships have visited Sri Lankan Ports recently; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN): (a) Government is aware of the Sri Lankan President's recent statement, reported in the press, that his Government is obtaining arms from Pakistan and Israel.

(b) Government have expressed concern at such developments and conveyed to the Government of Sri Lanka that only a negotiated political settlement can bring a lasting solution to the crisis.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Government are concerned at the induction of super-power naval vessels and warships as that would increase tension in the area. They are keen to see the implementation of the UN resolution No. 2832 of 1971 regarding the Indian Ocean as a Zone of peace.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Sir, the House is aware of the fact that the Sri Lankan Government, in order to wipe out the Tamil race, is getting arms aid and assistance from certain foreign countries like Pakistan, Israel, Britain, USA and South Korea. The involvement of these countries is increasing year by year. President Jayewardene himself has acknowledged the receipt of arms assistance from foreign countries. The honourable Minister has stated in his reply that he has represented the matter to the Sri lankan Government. But my question, Sir, is whether our Government represented the matter to the other countries which are coming forward to give arms aid to Sri Lanka and whether the Government registered its protest against this arms aid with those countries. This is the first question, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You observe the rule very well !

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the Government has taken up the matter with those countries with whom we have diplomatic relations. Obviously, with those countries like South Africa and Israel, we cannot take up the matter or lodge any protest. But we have made public statements about the military aid to Sri Lanka.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Aruna, put your second supplementary.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Sir, with regard to the political solution of the ethnic problem, if you go through the speeches of President Jayewardene today, you will see that our hope is entirely ruled out because he is eating his own words and he is speaking against the proposal which has already been placed before the Negotiating Committee. Sir, in the conference held

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Aladi Aruna *alias* V. Arunachalam.

yesterday, he has stated that he is preparing for a war against the Tamil people. Sir, in the conference he has stated that he is preparing for a war against the Tamil people and he has stated, "We will not agree to change the provincial boundary." But the important ingredient in the negotiation is the creation of a linguistic unit by delimiting certain areas in the eastern province. It was accepted and that was why there was a ray of hope during the negotiations. But now, Sir, everything is shattered and battered. That is why I would like to know from the honourable Minister what steps are going to be taken by the Government for the political solution of the problem immediately though the indications are against that including the speeches of President Jayewardene.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, President Jayewardene's statement, which I read this morning, reads like or appears to be a contingency statement that if the negotiations fail he will do this and that. But, as far as we are concerned, we sincerely hope that the negotiations will continue and they will succeed and we have repeatedly expressed our view on this.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Sir, he has said something against the principle of negotiation in the same speech.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. He has stated, "If the negotiations fail....". This is what the honourable Minister has stated. Therefore, they are still having hope. Why do you want to prevent that hope?

SHRI SANTOS KUMAR: Sir, Sri Lankan refugees are concentrated in the holy place of Rameshwaram. Therefore, it has become very risky and difficult for pilgrims to visit Rameshwaram which is one of the holiest places for the Hindus. My question is : Is the Government thinking of shifting the refugees to another site to vacate the holy place from.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not relevant.

SHRI M. VINCENT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know whether the Government is aware that Indian fishermen are periodically killed in the Indian Ocean by the Sri Lankan Army. Why is it not considered as an infiltration by the Indian Government as in the case of Northern borders? Is the Government considering Land and Sea different in case of infiltration by foreign troups.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Slowly. Please read slowly. You are reading so fast. Even I am not able to cope with it. The Minister must follow your question. Please read slowly.

SHRI M.VINCENT: I am not reading Sir, I am asking. What action has been taken so far? What are the permanent remedies you are going to take in future?

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: We have taken several precautions for protecting our sea borders as well as our land borders. We have issued instructions to our naval authorities to see that no transgressions on our sea border take place.

SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT: Sir, Pakistan is also one of the countries supplying arms to Sri Lanka. Are these arms from America or of their own manufacture?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are they Pakistani arms or American arms?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: I believe that most of the arms in Pakistan are manufactured either in the United States or elsewhere. Therefore, I think that some of them are involved in the transfer.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: While negotiations are going on, there is a threat by President Jayewardence that he will wage a total war. What are the measures that the Government of India is contemplating to face such a situation?

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: We have told the Sri Lankan Government categorically that the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka cannot and will not be solved by resorting to military action. We believe in this and I think it would be disastrous for Sri Lanka, Tamils and Sri Lankans if such

military recourse is taken to by the Sri Lankan Government I saw a statement by President Jayewardene the other day about the ethnic composition of the Sri Lankan population. He said that even his own family and the last of Kings of Sri Lanka had Tamil blood running in their veins. Therefore, it would not be an ethnic conflict. It would be a fatricidal conflict if there is recourse to military.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, Sri Lanka is obtaining arms from Pakistan and Israel to fight the Tamils. Some time ago, Sri Lankan Government had asked for and received assistance from MOSSAD, the Israeli Intelligence Agency which trained Sri Lankan forces in combating the Tamils. Surprisingly, this has caused no ripple in the Arab world. Pakistan is reported to have trained Sri Lankan forces. Therefore, my question is whether the Indian Missions in Arab countries have highlighted the Sri Lankan Israeli and the Pakistani-Sri Lankan nexus in these nefarious activities.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the fact of assistance by Israeli Intelligence Agencies and advisers to Sri Lanka is well known. It has been publicly stated by the Government of India that Sri Lanka is receiving military aid and training from Israel. I believe that this fact is also well known to the countries of the Arab world.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, Question (c) is: whether it is also a fact that a number of American Warships have visited Sri Lankan ports recently. The answer given is Government are concerned at the induction of super-power vessels and warships. The question is not that. The question is a specific one: "Whether it is also a fact that a number of American warships have visited Shri Lankan ports..." This has got its own implications. That is why the question was put like that. I would like to know the answer from the Minister.

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the visits of American warships had obviously an impact, on the situation in the area, a larger impact. And it has also certain consequences for the situation in Sri Lanka though not directly but at least indirectly. And we are also concerned about this impact on the Sri Lankan situation itself. But the important thing is that American warships crossing through the Indian Ocean which we all want to make a zone of peace has to be restrained and controlled. This is the root anwer to that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But the question is very specific--whether it is a fact that a number of American warships have visited Sri Lankan ports, not the Indian Ocean. Have they visited the Sri Lankan ports? Have you any information?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Yes, Sir, a number of US warships have visited the Sri Lankan ports. They say that it is for rest and recreation or as a goodwill visit.

श्री रामचन्द्र विकल : सभापति महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने जैसा कहा--समस्या का समाधान बातचीत से होगा, तो मैं जानना चाहता हूं, प्रधानमंत्री स्तर पर जयवर्धने से कई बार बातचीत हुई, विदेश सचिव भी कई बार श्रीलंका गए । वहां के लोग भी यहां आए, प्रधानमंत्री जी के विशेष-दूत भी कई बार श्रीलंका जा चुके हैं, तो अब तक की बातचीत का जो परिणाम है, वह अच्छा रहा या खराब रहा ?

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: Sir, it is as a result of these talks that a certain package of proposals have been formulated and this has been submitted to the TULF and the Tamil militant groups. And they are currently under discussion between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil groups. It is as a result of our initiative, our good offices that this package has been formulated.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr Chairman, Sir, the essential thrust of the question as originally raised is all about our efforts towards a political settlement in Sri Lanka, in the context of fresh arms induction in the region. The characteristics of the situation as obtained there just now are; firstly, there is no political settlement secondly India's domestic polity

is being affected; thirdly the latest round of efforts which is the meeting of the TULF with President Jayewardene have now result in President Jayewardene coming forward with a statement reported in today's papers about war in case of no settlement; forthly there is continued destabilisation in the region which is inimical to India's security interest; and finally, Sir, however harsh it may sound, this is a failure of Indian diplomacy because we no longer influence meaningfully the situation either in the region or in Sri Lanka...

MR. CHAIRMAN: the last is not a question but it is your comment.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Naturally, Sir, and of course, the Minister is forced to rebutt it as he would. Therefore, I would like to have a clarification because repeatedly, in the House we have been assured by those very brave statements of the predecessor of the present Minister of External Affairs that the situation in Sri Lanka is now to be settled wanted in a "compressed time-frame of weeks." Subsequently, Mr. Shiv Shanker also said a similarly brave thing. Therefore, I would now like to know from the Government as to what is the time-frame within which the Government is now working for a political settlement in Sri Lanka. Secondly...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. You have put five questions.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: All right, Sir.

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: Sir, with regard to the time-frame, as the hon. Member knows, negotiations between the parties in conflict are currently going on. We understand that by the middle of this month the TULF leader will be visiting Sri Lanka again to resume discussions with the Sri Lankan President and other parties concerned. Therefore, there is going on at present very serious, earnest attempts to come to a political settlement. These are under urgent discussion. And they will go on. I cannot give exactly a time limit for this. It is impossible to do so with regard to political questions of this character. Therefore, we do not rule out a political settlement in Sri Lanka. We believe very firmly that a political setttlement is unavoidable and there is no military alternative to this problem. And, therefore, it would be compelling even on the Sri Lankan authorities to come to a political agreement with the parties concerned. The other issue which the hon. Member has raised is about the reference by Sri Lankan President to war, if necessary. I suppose in politics people sometimes talk with two voices in certain situations. But we are convinced that because of the inherent need for a negotiated political settlement, whatever be the attitude of the Sri Lankan authorities, they would be compelled to deal in a peacefull manner, political manner, with this issue, if they are to solve this problem and if they are not to bring disastrous consequences to their own polity and their own society.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, the hon. Minister has said earlier that he is hopeful, if I have listened to him correctly. I am not against hope or against hoping against hope. But the point is when negotiations are going on, Jayewardene is talking in terms of war. It is not done. He is negotiating with the leadears of Tamils and, at the same time, he is talking of war. I do not understand the posture of Jayawardene. Sir, I would like the hon. Minister to ponder very seriously over what will happen if negotiations fail. He is hoping that negotiations will succeed. We all hope that they will succeed, but suppose they fail, what will be the situation then and what will be our answer to meet that situation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are a very senior Member. You know that no hypothetical questions should be asked.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: They have said what they are going to do. But the question is what we are going to do.

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the Chairman has given the answer. I thank him for that. But it is clear that I hope against hope that a political settlement would be arrived at. But if it fails this is something for us, we will have to consider

and our Government will have to consider, seriously and urgently, as to what we should do at that time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Chitta Basu. We have spent enough time on this. I am now going to the next.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, we have been given to understand that India's role is not merely a role of a mediator but India wants to play a positive role in this matter. Now, in this context, and in view of the increasing involvement of some foreign powers in supplying arms to Sri Lanka, may I know from the hon. Minister what actually is the positive roll that the Government of India is playing, whether the Government has given its reaction to the package proposals which have already been communicated to the Government because the militants and the TULF feel that if the Government of India takes a positive view of the proposals the Sri Lankan Government will be forced to take a particular point of view.

SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the Government of India has taken a very positive attitude in this crisis not as a mediator but as what we call someone who gives his good offices for settlement. As you know, there was a deadlock in negotiations between the two parties and there was the outbreak of considerable violence And during this period they insisted that we cannot go ahead with our good offices unless there is a cessation of this violence and there has been some cessation in the violence though it has occurred again and again. And it is also through our help that the proposals which have been fashioned during discussions have been packaged into something which we thought would be a reasonable basis for discussion between the parties concerned. Neither party was very satisfied with it; but they thought it was a basis for negotiation and the Government of India's positive role has been to help formulate this reasonable basis, this package of proposals. We helped in the formulation of these things and it is the basis on which the parties concerned are in negotiations at the moment. I think this is a positive contribution. Its also a positive contribution, that there is some lessening in the reckless violence which has been going on there, though it has not ceased altogether.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

*262. [*The Questioner (Shri Santosh Kumar Sahu) was absent. For answer* vide *cols.* infra 31-32.].

Allotment of controlled cloth

*263. SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Karnataka Government has requested the Central Government to enhance the quota of allotment of controlled cloth from 14.136 million sq. metres to 34.136 million sq. metres; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Central Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The request, however, could not be acceded to in view of the fact that the Government of Karnataka could not lift the entire quality of controlled cloth allotted to them as per present Scheme.

SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister as to what is the policy of the Government of India in allocating quota to different States and in pursuance of this policy, whether the scheme has been prepared? If so, what are the broad outlines of the scheme prepared under which the Government of Karnataka could not lift the stocks. Secondly what exactly is the requirement of the Government of Karnataka? What is the request they made and whether that request could not be heeded to only because of this reason or was there any other reason involved?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN: Allotment of quota of controlled cloth is made in following manner Two-thirds is made on the basis of population and one-third is made on the basis of population under poverty line.